

FOUR ASPECTS OF LOVE
24th Sunday Ordinary Time Year C, 15th September 2019

FIRST ASPECT: LOVING PROTECTION OF THE VULNERABLE

We always need to be alert, responsible and transparent in our protection of all our children and vulnerable adults.

Love needs to be actioned.

This weekend Clare Kennedy, our parish [Local Safeguarding Children Representative](#) will update us and widen our understanding at all Masses.

We invite Clare forward. [Presentation on Safeguarding by Clare]

We thank Clare who always reminds us that it is the responsibility of each one of us, the whole community, to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.
And all are invited to take time and to pray at our [Memorial Plaque](#) in the prayer garden.

SECOND ASPECT: PARABLES OF CELEBRATING INCLUSIVE LOVE

Today we have *three* parables from the Gospel of Luke 15:1-32.

The background to the scene is that the Pharisees and scribes were grumbling about how inclusive Jesus was, and they said,

'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

Jesus calls them to be more inclusive, forgiving and loving by telling *three* parables.

1. THE SHEPHERD AND LOST SHEEP

The first parable is about a shepherd who searches for a lost sheep.

The parable ends with the words:

*'When he has found it,
he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices.
And when he comes home,
he calls together his friends and neighbours,
saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for
I have found my sheep that was lost."
Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven
over one sinner who repents
than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.'*

Sometimes we need to search for a length of time and travel a distance to find the lost.
May we rejoice with the lost who are aided in their coming home to Jesus.

2. THE WOMAN AND LOST COIN

The second parable is about a woman who loses a silver coin,
and searches the house for it until found.

The parable ends with the words

*'When she has found it,
she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying,
"Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost."
Just so, I tell you, there is joy
in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.'*

The coin was not far away.
Sometimes the lost are in our midst.
May we rejoice in finding the lost who are present around us.

3. FATHER CARING FOR HIS TWO SONS

The third parable is about two lost sons and their father.
The younger son squanders all his inheritance,
lives in poverty and decides to return home.

We hear how he is welcomed by the father:

***‘But while he was still far off, his father saw him
and was filled with compassion;
he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.’***

We are also told that the father instructs the servants:

***“Quickly, bring out a robe—
the best one—and put it on him;
put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.
And get the fatted calf and kill it,
and let us eat and celebrate;
for this son of mine was dead and is alive again;
he was lost and is found!”
And they began to celebrate.’***

The older son begrudges how his brother is warmly welcomed home.
We too can be trapped in ‘duty’, and begrudge others,
and fail to love deeply.

***The father goes out into the property to find the older son and says:
“Son, you are always with me,
and all that is mine is yours.
But we had to celebrate and rejoice,
because this brother of yours was dead
and has come to life;
he was lost and has been found.”***

The father offers an invitation to love more deeply.
The father appreciates the older son, and loves him so much,
that he wants him to be moved by love.

THIRD ASPECT: CARRYING THE CROSS AS A LOVING FAMILY

September 14th each year is the feast of the *Exaltation of the Cross*.
We reflect on the Cross in our own lives.

At last Friday evening prayer vigil,

- after praying for peace,
- after praying for the firefighters who have been battling fires in a time of dryness, drought and wind,
- after praying for those people whose homes and possessions

- have been devastated during the fires,
- after praying for people who are being persecuted because of their faith or beliefs,
- after praying for people who are sick and those struggling in any way,

we walked in candlelight procession before and after our time of **sacred prayer**.

This weekend the large Cross has been placed in the sanctuary. The Cross is made up of slivers of wood, representing each of us.

Together we come before Jesus at the foot of the Cross.
 Together we carry the Cross with Jesus.
 Together we pray for others around the world carrying the Cross.
 Together we celebrate that Jesus, our Saviour, died for us, and rose from death, to save us.

Together today we place our own prayer before Jesus.

Last year at this time, I was in Iraq for the Feast of the Cross, and listened as people, directly or through translators, shared their stories of the Cross in their lives. I saw some of the places of devastation, and witnessed the efforts of people to renew their lives.

Before the Cross we pray in loving solidarity as family of God.

FOURTH ASPECT: RESPECTING CREATION

In society we remember human bravery and courage and perseverance. We tell stories from our families, our friends, our church, our society. Whether running a marathon or being a carer for a loved one for many years. They are an inspiration to all of us.

During the Church's [Season of Creation](#) from September 1st until October 4th, let us conclude with an account of incredible perseverance in respect for creation.

Each year we have international visitors. Some have flown a great distance. Having prepared for their journey to Australia, they depart for a 13,000 kilometre journey from Siberia to South-East Queensland. They arrive around August and September. Places for them to stay include **Tinchi Tamba** in the local area, **Boondall** in a nearby suburb, **Ormiston**, near our Archdiocesan [Santa Teresa Spirituality Centre](#), western parts of **Moreton Island** and **North Stradbroke Island** and other places around Moreton Bay. In the course of this **ultra-marathon**, they will lose around 40% of their body weight. They are *Eastern Curlews*. And they are not alone. Other smaller migratory birds make similar journeys.

AND WHAT HOSPITALITY DO WE OFFER THEM?
HOW DO WE CARE FOR THEIR ROOSTS AND MANGROVE FEEDING PLACES?
HOW DO WE PROTECT THESE AREAS WHICH AFFECT THEIR SURVIVAL?

And then, after a few months, the Eastern Curlew begin their long, long, long journey home. If we do not act as responsible stewards of creation, then the courageous Eastern Curlew will be lost to future generations of our common home.

Imagine Jesus telling a parable to us about perseverance.
And imagine that parable being about an Eastern Curlew.
WHAT WOULD JESUS SAY?

Next week, our [Care for Creation Group](#) will present a special prayer on biodiversity to us. With it will be a watercolour painting of the Eastern Curlew.

Our love includes a strong commitment to

- the protection of children and vulnerable adults,
- the protection of Creation,
- carrying the Cross lovingly as family
- and the inclusive love of Jesus

as he opens our minds and hearts with the parables of
the shepherd and the lost sheep
the woman and the lost silver coin
the father and the two lost sons.

Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/091519.cfm>]

